

Reclaim Education

Notes on the global struggle

Sept. 5th: Global Day of Action to Free Maxwell and All Political Prisoners

Since October 2010 Maxwell Dlamini has been president of the Swaziland National Union of Students (SNUS) and a popular face in Swaziland. For the past years he has been actively involved in the struggle against tuition fees, for better study conditions and the right to education. Furthermore he is part of

the regional democracy movement. The Kingdom of Swaziland is considered an absolute monarchy. Inspired by the recent uprisings in North Africa, as well as the Middle East, thousands took to the streets within the capital Mbabane for a just and democratic society and against the predominant balance of power. The protesters were attacked by the special police forces - hundreds were arrested. One day later, Maxwell wanted to support the democracy movement with a 3,000 student strong demonstration.

It did not come to that, however, as he was taken into custody on the flimsy pretext that he was allegedly in possession of explosive materials during the protests on the same day. Maxwell denies that. For the local democracy movement as well as various activists around the world, who know him personally, it is undeniable that the selective criminalisation of Maxwell's activities is supposed to harm

and intimidate the movement as a whole.

In reaction to these circumstances a Free Maxwell campaign was initiated.



Furthermore, activists on the newly created International Student Movement - Africa (ISM-Africa) platform decided to call for the

"Global Day of Action to Free Maxwell and All Political Prisoners" on September 5th to support the democracy movement in Swaziland, especially the political prisoners:

„We call on all progressive organisations, youths and concerned people around the world to march to Swaziland embassies/consulates on September 5th 2011 in their region to add their voices to demand the immediate release of Maxwell Dlamini and all political prisoners. Of course alternative forms of action are also welcome, if you have no embassy or consulate of Swaziland near you.“

In total at least five political prisoners are currently held in custody by the Swazi government. They are kept imprisoned simply because they have been part of the struggle for democracy, human rights and social and economic progress. These activists and leaders have been routinely tortured and denied access to family members and friends. Their health is deter-

iorating each day and they are denied proper medical assistance. They are held on trumped up charges because the government considers their activism for democracy and freedom a danger to the rule of King Mswati III. This Global Day of Action calls for the unconditional release of all political prisoners in Swaziland and around the world, as well as for concerted action to prevent more activists being detained as the struggle for democracy and freedom continues. Please use ism.africa@gmail.com to announce your actions in advance and send in your reports with pictures and videos afterwards. This is important, so that your activities can also be included in press releases and people worldwide will get to hear about them.

For more basic details on the Maxwell case:

http://ism-global.net/free_maxwell
Videos to learn more about the situation in Swaziland:

ism-global.net/videos_swaziland
For a complete call for the Global Day of Action see:

http://ism-global.net/global_action_day_sept5

The Free Maxwell campaign:
freemaxwelldlamini.wordpress.com
Hashtag on twitter: #freeMaxwell

Turning Global Solidarity into Reality!

About this newsletter

This newsletter is part of the communication infrastructure of the independent platform "International Student Movement" (ISM). The ISM is being used and shaped by education activists and groups around the world who are struggling against the increasing privatisation of public education and for free emancipatory education for all.

This newsletter is the result of voluntary work done by a few individuals who are passionate about the cause. The positions expressed are not in any way representative for any group or the "International Student Movement" as a whole.

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University Reform in Greece sparks Protest

August 24th: After a two-day debate parliament passed a new law which aims to change things on different levels. The changes target the power of student groups which have influenced university politics for decades, controlling the election of directors, staff appointments and even examination grades.

Furthermore the university asylum law was scrapped.

The bill paves the way for "independent" evaluations of university academics and for restrictions on the length of time students have to complete their degrees. Critics say the overhaul puts undue emphasis on business-oriented degrees to the

detriment of academic disciplines less in demand by employers.

Many students and lecturers are currently on vacation, therefore in reaction "only" up to 2,000 people took to the streets of Athens on the same day. But that was just the first step.

The struggle continues – everywhere.

Latest News on Coordination for the "Global Weeks of Action" in November

During the past two months, in the last three global chat meetings on the International Student Movement (ISM) platform, education activists from around the world decided to call for "Global Weeks of Action" this November. So far the following was agreed on:

Calling for "Global Weeks of Action" (GWA) during the timeframe of November 07-20 - with November 17 potentially marking a highlight.

Using the following three elements as a basic framework for the GWA:

- ▶ the International Joint Statement - currently endorsed by about 80 groups worldwide (ism-global.net/international_joint_statement)

- ▶ common slogans, such as: "education is not for \$A£€", "one world – one struggle", "free education for emancipation; one world – one struggle", "for the social revolution; one world – one struggle", "education is not a commodity; one world – one struggle", "abolish student debt; one world – one struggle"

- ▶ common symbols: education barcode being attacked by two persons, fist holding pen, fist holding half pen and half wrench.

The slogans and symbols should make it easy to visually communicate, both locally and globally, that your action is connected to the GWA. Open question: should we try to synchronise actions globally on November 17 (Thursday) in any way?

The main challenge right now is to obviously connect the various activities

linked to the Global Weeks of Action to somehow promote the feeling locally of a common global in communities around the world. Ideas so far include "live broadcasts" via skype or phone. Groups in Indonesia and the Philippines have already announced that they will have synchronised actions on that day. Discussion on this



will continue during the next global chat meetings, in the meantime, all are asked to discuss these issues on the local level and brainstorm ideas on how to better link the actions.

To-do lists in the run-up to the GWA within the next few weeks on two levels:

- ▶ On the global level: finalising designs for the commons symbols in low and high resolution (graphic designers needed for that); creating mobilisation videos; translating the International Joint Statement and the "Latest News on Coordination for November 2011" into as many languages as possible.

- ▶ Suggestions for the local/regional level: arrange meetings with fellow

activists to inform them about the GWA, discuss it, and broaden the initiative; communicate updates on local developments and plans in the build up of the GWA to the global level (e.g. through the ISM (global) mailing list).

Inviting everyone identifying with the struggle to the next global chat meeting on August 28th (sunday) at 1pm EST/ 5pm GMT/ 7pm CET/ 10.30pm IST to continue coordinations for November.

The first activities linked to the GWA were already announced in Europe and North America. In these turbulent times, the GWA this November can really mark a breakthrough in the global struggle against the commercialisation of education (as well as all other aspects of life) and for free emancipatory education

for all. Subscribe to the ISM (global) mailing list to stay in touch with the latest coordination efforts and feel free to send an e-mail to

united.for.education@gmail.com. Or simply participate in the next global chat meeting to clarify questions and get involved. It is vital that local groups announce their actions to the global level in advance so that the flow of information on the global level generally improves!

From now on the latest updates on the coordination efforts ahead of the GWA can be accessed on this page: http://ism-global.net/coordinations_november2011

- it will be updated continuously!

★ one world - one struggle ★

International Student Movement - Africa founded

At the beginning of August a few fellow activists in South Africa and Swaziland initiated the International Student Movement - Africa (ISM-Africa). The purpose is to have a

Global Day of Action to Free Maxwell and All Political Prisoners. The communication infrastructure of ISM-Africa consists of an online forum: ism-global.net/forum/64 and a group on facebook



communication platform especially for groups and activists struggling against the increasing privatisation of education and for free emancipatory education anywhere within Africa. It will be used to exchange information, network and make coordinations across the continent and beyond. All identifying with this struggle are invited to use and shape it. ISM-Africa, just like the ISM platform as a whole, is independent from any political parties, trade unions or other organisations and is being upheld solely by individual activists. Currently the main focus by people on the platform is to prepare for the

facebook.com/groups/ism.africa so far.

Questions and suggestions in connection with the platform can be send to ism.africa@gmail.com.